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ABSTRACT

A statewide study was conducted to collect demographic data on teachers of non-credit community college courses; to determine the reasons for their part-time employment in continuing education programs; and to ascertain differences in reasons for teaching based on age, sex, length of time engaged in teaching, satisfaction with teaching, and employment as a teacher elsewhere. A two-part survey instrument was sent to a statewide random sample of 294 part-time teachers in non-credit education programs in the six community college areas in the state. Study findings, based on a 78% response rate, included the following: (1) 37% of the respondents were between 25 and 34 years of age, two-thirds were female, and 55% were employed full-time in another capacity; (2) 47% taught hobby and recreation classes; (3) 35.1% had taught for 1 year or less at their present institution; (4) 80% received between $6 and $10 per contact hour; (5) 99% were satisfied with part-time teaching in continuing education; (6) over 45% of the respondents did not have a baccalaureate degree; (7) 65% indicated that personal interest or a hobby had prepared them for teaching; (8) 70% had been involved as learners in continuing education within the past year; and (9) the major reasons given for teaching were to learn; for personal pleasure; to share ideas, knowledge, or skills; and interest in the subject matter. (HB)

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Part-time Teachers of Community Colleges: Who are They and Why do They Teach?

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Abstract

The role of noncredit courses in community colleges is emerging as a vital force in today's educational setting. The rapidly expanding growth in students has called for a complementary increase in part-time faculty. Although research has been done on why students take noncredit courses, little is known about why teachers work with these students. This study presents the demographics and teaching motivation of part-time teachers of noncredit courses in community colleges. The results have implications for both community college administrators and higher education faculty on how to keep and strengthen the links of this little understood but highly used faculty.

Professionals within the field of adult and continuing education can attest to their field's growth in the United States. Growth has occurred in two ways. First, the field has grown in status. Parsons (1979) stated that one of the hallmarks of the area has been the movement of the education of adults from the periphery to the center of the educational scene. He further stated that it is only recently that the education of adults achieved acceptance by most educators.

Along with the growth in status has been the growth of the field of adult and continuing education in the sheer numbers of adults who are involved in adult education programs. Cross (1979) reported that "adult learners constitute the most rapidly growing segment of American education" (p. 75).

Numerous societal and institutional factors have contributed to the growth of continuing education, and this growth has been dispersed in a variety of institutional settings. Documentation of this growth has appeared in local, state, and national reports (Schlimgen, 1981; Nebraska Coordination Commission on Postsecondary Education, 1981; The Condition of Education, 1980). The role of the two-year, or junior and community colleges in providing a considerable portion of continuing education in this country is unquestionable. When comparing total registrations for noncredit continuing education activities in 1978 for institutions of higher education throughout the United States, the two-year colleges reported slightly over half (5.2 million) of the total registrations (Condition of Education, 1980, p. 246).

Background of the Study

In attempting to understand the growth in continuing education programs, educators can look to literature dealing with adult learner

participation (Houle, 1961; Boshier, 1976; Burgress, 1971, Carp, Peterson, and Roelfs, 1974; Cross 1979, 1981; Morstain and Smart, 1977; Johnston and Rivera, 1965). This literature reflects the variety of approaches used to discern who adult participants are, what they participate in, and why they participate. With this concentration on adult participation, educators have gained useful information and understanding for theoretical and practical purposes in the field.

In light of the overall growth of continuing education programs, compared to the scope and number of studies conducted about the characteristics and motives of participants, few studies concerning the characteristics and motivations of teachers of continuing education have been found. The lack of research about teachers of adults presents a gap, for just as the number of participants and programs has increased, so probably has the number of teachers. Nevertheless, data are not readily available about teachers of continuing education--who they are, or why they teach. However, just as the "who and why" of learners are important for theoretical and practical use in the field, so are the "who and why" of teachers important. Just as learners are essential to continuing education programs, so are teachers. In noncredit continuing education programs and particularly in community colleges, it is commonly believed that teachers are generally part-time, notoriously underpaid and under appreciated, and frequently committed to other work or family obligations. If these commonly believed characteristics of part-time teachers are true, it is indeed of interest that persons choose to participate in continuing education programs as teachers.

To address the apparent neglect of research in the realm of part-time teachers of continuing education, a statewide study was conducted. A

theoretical area which assisted in the investigation was that of Houle (1961), who did an intensive investigation of adult learners to determine why they participated in continued learning. His research indicated three categories of learners: (1) Learning-oriented adults who participate primarily for the sake of learning and acquiring knowledge, (2) Activity-oriented people who participate for the personal social involvement with no necessary connection to course content, (3) Goal-oriented persons who participate primarily as a means to accomplishing specific goals. Boshier (1971) then developed a Likert-type instrument used to explore Houle's typology through factor analysis of data on motivational orientations of adult education participants. Morton (1982) utilized Houle's categories of reasons and applied them to reasons why part-time teachers participate in teaching; the research instrument for this study was developed after also reviewing Boshier's and other instruments used in adult learner studies. The purpose of this study was threefold:

(1) To collect demographic data on part-time teachers in noncredit continuing education programs in regards to: years engaged in part-time teaching, number of classes taught, category of classes taught, pay, level of satisfaction with pay and teaching, employment status, formal education, experiences that prepared them for teaching, participation as a learner in continuing education, age, and sex.

(2) To determine the major reasons why adults teach part-time in noncredit continung education programs.

(3) To determine if there are significant differences on reasons for teaching, using Houle's typology, for the independent variables of age, sex, length of time engaged in teaching, satisfaction with teaching, and employment as a teacher elsewhere.

Methodology

Sample - To establish the content domain, the related literature was reviewed, and an open-ended survey was given to administrators and teachers. Based on that survey and review, a written questionnaire was developed, content validated, pilot tested and then mailed to a statewide random sample of 294 part-time teachers in noncredit education programs in the six state community college areas. Two hundred thirty, or 78%, returned the questionnaire, and 208 (71%) were usable.

Instrumentation - Part I of the questionnaire consisted of fifteen items which asked for information related to the first purpose of the study. Part II consisted of 29 Likert type items that were stated as reasons for teaching. Following the 29 items, two additional items asked respondents to indicate their three most important current reasons for teaching (of the 29), and their three most important reasons for when they started teaching. The reliability for the 29 items, using coefficient alpha was .85. For analysis purposes, the 29 items were categorized into three groups of reasons (activity-oriented, goal-oriented, and learning oriented). Summed Likert scores were obtained for each of the three groups. To determine if significant differences existed on reasons for teaching and the selected demographic variables, a one factor analysis of variance for each of the three groups of reasons was performed by each of the demographic variables.

Results

The response rate of 78% to a mailed questionnaire from a researcher unknown to the respondents was relatively high. It perhaps points to the quality and type of people who teach in continuing education and their high interest in and enthusiasm for teaching. Hence, the response rate was much

higher than one might normally expect. However, the response rate might also lead one to speculate that part-time teachers have been neglected. To them, the questionnaire could have been an indication that someone was interested in them and their teaching. Therefore, they reacted to the interest shown in them by responding to the questionnaire.

Who are the teachers who responded? What are their characteristics? The results of Part I of the questionnaire provide both information and a basis for discussion.

Age - Over one-third (37%) of the teachers were in the 25-34 year old age group, and 71% were 44 or younger. Slightly less than ten percent were 55 or older. This heavy use of younger teachers raises questions about utilization of older people as teachers: Are continuing education programmers overlooking the contributions that older, more experienced individuals can bring to the classroom? Should special attempts to recruit older teachers be made? Is it necessarily desirable to have different age groups represented in the part-time teaching staff?

Sex - Two-thirds of the questionnaire respondents were female. Could the heavy use of female instructors be related to: the pay for part-time teaching, the types of classes offered through noncredit programs, their availability of free time? Should program administrators attempt to have a balance of male and female instructors? Practically speaking, to what extent should an attempt be made?

Employment Status - Aside from teaching part-time in a continuing education program, respondents were asked to indicate their employment status. Over 55% were employed full time, and 25% were employed part-time. A total of 27% indicated the role of full time homemaker, retired, or other. These results seem to indicate that part-time teachers are indeed

busy people who have other time commitments and responsibilities. Administrators can ask themselves what assumptions they have erroneously made about the time availability of their instructors, and can also question the types of support they can give their busy instructors to help with the teaching process.

Category of Classes Taught - Nearly half (47%) of the teachers taught hobby and recreational classes. Approximately ten to twelve percent taught in each of three categories: home and family, general education, personal development. Only three, two, and one individuals taught public affairs, agriculture, or religion classes, respectively. The preponderance in the hobby and recreational category could perhaps be attributed to the classification of credit versus noncredit classes in the institutions represented. However, it can again raise the question of balance. Depending on the mission of one's institution or department, should there be a balance of program offerings? Are offerings imbalanced because teachers for other program areas are not being recruited or are not available?

Years Engaged in Teaching - Over one-third (35.1%) of the respondents had taught one year or less at their present institution. Was this relatively high proportion of new teachers due to a high turnover rate which means that a third of the teachers are lost each year? What implications does this have for administrative time for training and orienting new staff? What effect is there on program continuity? Are teachers leaving because of factors that could be controlled by administration? In a more positive vein, were there many new teachers because new classes were scheduled in response to changing needs, interests, or clientele?

Pay and Satisfaction - Eighty percent of the respondents received only $6-$10 per contact hour for teaching, which is low compared to pay for credit courses. Yet 16% were very satisfied and 66% were satisfied with the pay they received. When asked to indicate their general satisfaction with part-time teaching in continuing education, 53% were very satisfied, 46% were satisfied, and only one individual was not satisfied. There was a statistically significant relationship (Chi-square = 228.1, 4 d.f., $p < .05$) between satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with teaching: the more satisfied with teaching the more satisfied with pay. This leads to the question: If administrators foster an environment of support for their part-time teachers, will salary level remain as important an issue as it sometimes is? Will teachers teach for low salaries if their general satisfaction is high? What factors contribute to general satisfaction? Were the response rates high in satisfaction because those who are not satisfied quit teaching?

Level of Formal Education - Over 45% of the respondents did not have a baccalaureate degree, while only 21% possessed master's degrees or higher. Is the relatively low educational level a reflection of the "hobby and recreational" nature of the programs or the institutions? Would minimum educational requirements for employment or certification be beneficial to noncredit continuing education programs? Should administrators attempt to recruit teachers with higher educational levels?

Experiences That Prepared for Teaching - Response to what prepared teachers for part-time teaching were different than what might be expected. Nearly 65% responded that personal interest or a hobby had prepared them for teaching. This was not surprising, however, considering that nearly half taught hobby or recreational classes. Yet 63% indicated that past or

current work experience had prepared them to teach and 58% responded that personal study had helped prepare them. Over 50% indicated formal education as preparation, and only 13% indicted that inservice or staff development from their institution had helped them to teach. Could program administrators encourage more staff development activities that help teachers teach others what sometimes they learned on their own in a non-class setting? Are experiences outside the formal education scene as worthy for preparing teachers as formal training in a content area?

Participation as a Learner - When asked to indicate their participation as a learner, 70% of the respondents said they had been involved in continuing education within the past year. Teachers are clearly learners as well as teachers. Are administrators aware of their teachers' involvement as learners? What can be done to foster and encourage that involvement and mentality within a specific institution? How could the enthusiasm of the part-time teachers for learning be used to promote the program to participants?

Why do people teach part-time in continuing education programs? From the results of Part I of the questionnaire it can be seen that those surveyed have other time commitments and responsibilities, and the pay for teaching is relatively low. Yet most are satisfied with teaching, and are actively involved in learning, as well.

Reasons for Teaching - Part II of the Part-Time Teacher Questionnaire included 29 items stated as reasons for teaching. Respondents indicated on a five point scale their agreement or disagreement with each item. Of the 29 items, those with the highest ranking means (and therefore the highest agreement as reasons for teaching) were:

I teach because I also learn by teaching. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.5)

I teach because it is a personal pleasure. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.5)

I teach to share my ideas, knowledge, or skills. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.49)

I teach because I am interested in the subject matter and want to advocate it. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.46)

I teach because it gives me a sense of accomplishment. ($\bar{x}$ = 4.42)

Examples of items with low means (and therefore low agreement as reasons for teaching) were:

I teach because I am unable to find full-time employment. ($\bar{x}$ = 1.4)

I teach to "get out of the house". ($\bar{x}$ = 1.98)

When respondents were asked to indicate their three current most important reasons for teaching, an additional item emerged that was not among the top five means. "I teach because I want to help others" was an important reason for those who had taught more than one year.

When the reasons were grouped into the three categories of activity-oriented reasons (N = 10), goal-oriented reasons (N = 12), and learning-oriented reasons (N = 7), three of the top five reasons were in the learning-oriented group, and there was one top reason in each of the other two groups. Of the ten items in the activity-oriented group (example: I teach because it is an easy way to get acquainted with new people), six had a mean of 3.5 or above. Of the twelve items in the goal-oriented group (example: I teach because for me teaching provides beneficial business/work contacts), only four had a mean of 3.5 or higher. In the learning-oriented group (example: I teach because I also learn by teaching) all seven items had a mean of 3.98 and above.

As indicated by the respondents, these major reasons for teaching part-time in noncredit continuing education are generally because of a

healthy interest in a subject, in self-growth and learning, in accomplishment, and in others. However, it should not be overlooked that when asked to indicate their three most important reasons for when they started teaching, respondents indicated two additional items: "I teach because someone asked me," and "I teach because it provides extra income." New teachers with one year or less experience also indicated they were teaching for the extra income and because someone asked them.

Difference on Reasons for Teaching - For activity-oriented and goal-oriented reasons for teaching there was a significant difference with age ($F = 3.12$, $p < .01$; $F = 4.09$, $p < .01$) and sex ($F = 21.81$, $p < .01$; $F = 7.81$, $p < .01$). The oldest age category (55 or older) indicated higher agreement with both activity and goal-oriented reasons for teaching than did the four younger age groups. Additionally, females had higher agreement with activity and goal-oriented reasons than did males. These differences were not found for learning-oriented reasons. There was, however, a significant difference ($F = 3.98$, $p < .02$) found between satisfaction with teaching and learning-oriented reasons. The more satisfied the respondent was with teaching the more he or she agreed to the learning-oriented reasons for part-time teaching.

Discussion and Implications

The findings show that people teach for a variety of reasons and that there are differences between reasons why people start teaching, why they continue, and that there are differences in reasons by sex and age. People often start teaching because they are asked. Administrators who wait for volunteers will generally be kept waiting. The extra income is a factor in recruiting new teachers, but as individuals continue to teach the more intangible rewards for teaching appear to become more important. Program

administrators should be aware of the variety of reasons for teaching. However, that raises the question of what administrators can do to show an awareness of these varying reasons when recruiting new teachers and retaining experienced teachers. One suggestion is to emphasize the personal and professional benefits (such as the learning and the sense of accomplishment) that can be gained from teaching part time. Recruitment procedures that emphasize salary and extra income may attract some individuals, but not all. Secondly, administrative staff must communicate to the teachers, in a conscious manner, that they are an essential element of the program and the institution. Administrators must highlight to them the ways in which they can help others learn and grow, and that they have an opportunity to share with others in their area of interest.

Can being aware of who teachers are in a continuing education program and knowing why they teach, make an impact on recruiting and retaining them? Will that knowledge also affect the overall quality, balance, and management of the continuing education arm of the institution? The answers to these questions lie in the pure practicality of administrators trying to find out. By acting on these findings and surveying their own part-time teachers, administrators can get data specific to their program and their institution. Aside from the possibility of the positive response from teachers who have felt neglected, the results will provide individual administrators with helpful data for analyzing their efforts at hiring teachers, and in managing their programs.

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